

17 April 1957

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR

Herewith is the report of General Erskine's trip to Burma of which he spoke to you the other day.

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

L. K. TRUSCOTT, JR.
General, USA, Ret.

Attachment

[Redacted]

DOCUMENT NO. _____
NO CHANGE IN CLASS. ☐
☐ DECLASSIFIED
CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S ☒ 2011
NEXT REVIEW DATE: _____
AUTH: HR 70-2
DATE: 13/2/81 REVIEWER: [Redacted]

OSD REVIEW COMPLETED

DOCUMENT NO. _____
NO CHANGE IN CLASS. ☐
☐ DECLASSIFIED
CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S ☒ 2011
NEXT REVIEW DATE: _____
AUTH: HR 70-2
DATE: 13/2/81 REVIEWER: [Redacted]



Approved For Release 2003/10/07 : CIA-RDP80R01731R000300160002-4

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

16 April 1957

MEMORANDUM FOR DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT: Trip to Burma

Transmitted herewith is a copy of the report on my trip to Burma which has been submitted to the Secretary of Defense, less Tabs C, D, E and F. I regret that the missing enclosures are not available. We were furnished only two copies of the list of equipment desired by Burmese officials. The Attache report was also furnished in only two copies.

Copies of the enclosures not included herewith will be provided on a loan basis upon request.

Enclosure
Trip Report

[Signature]
G. B. ERSKINE
General, USMC (Ret)
Assistant to the
Secretary of Defense
(Special Operations)

NO OBJECTION
RECOMMENDATION OF
AUTHORITY: HR 70-2
REVIEWER ☐ DATE 7/2/81

25X1



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

16 April 1957

MEMORANDUM FOR DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT: Trip to Burma

Transmitted herewith is a copy of the report on my trip to Burma which has been submitted to the Secretary of Defense, less Tabs C, D, E and F. I regret that the missing enclosures are not available. We were furnished only two copies of the list of equipment desired by Burmese officials. The Attache report was also furnished in only two copies.

Copies of the enclosures not included herewith will be provided on a loan basis upon request.

Enclosure
Trip Report

G. B. ERSKINE
General, USMC (Ret)
Assistant to the
Secretary of Defense
(Special Operations)

Document No. _____
Review of this document by CIA has
determined that
☐ CIA has no objection to declass
☐ It contains information of CIA
interest that must remain
classified at TS S
Authority: HR 70-2
☒ It contains nothing of CIA interest
Date 13/2/81 Reviewer

25X1

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

SUBJECT: Report on Trip to Burma, February-March, by General G. B. Erskine

I departed Washington 22 February 1957 for Rangoon, Burma, to discuss with appropriate Burmese officials the military aid and training assistance that may be desired from the United States by the Government of the Union of Burma. Colonel Clifford Nash, USAF, and Lieutenant Colonel Guy M. Blencoe, USA, were assigned to accompany me by the Departments of the Air Force and Army respectively. Commander J. B. Sprague, USN, Naval Attache at Rangoon, was requested to join my group as the naval assistant upon arrival at Rangoon and did so.

My group arrived in Rangoon late 25 February. On 26 February we conferred with the U. S. Ambassador, were briefed on the Burma situation, and accepted an agenda and travel schedule which had been arranged by the Embassy.

On 27 February, accompanied by Ambassador Satterthwaite, we called on General Ne Win, Chief of Staff of the Union of Burma Armed Forces, who welcomed us and gave us a general outline of the objectives of the Burma Government as regards the armed forces. During this discussion General Ne Win stated that basically their plans were to smash the insurrection and build a defense force capable of offering reasonable resistance to external aggression. He also indicated a desire to have training assistance from the United States and to build up arms and ammunition plants in Burma. He briefly stated that it is now planned to operate against the insurgents throughout the year including the monsoon season and explained his new techniques of employing "flying squads" in a relentless pursuit where insurgents are reported to be operating. General Ne Win admitted that the insurgents did get some arms and ammunition through "leaks" in the armed forces and the Union police, but declared that most supplies came from external sources. He promised full cooperation with us. It was evident that he desired military assistance from the United States.

Subsequent to visiting the Chief of Staff, we called upon the Honorable Minister of Defense, U Ba Swe, the then Prime Minister, who welcomed us and stated the government objectives in much the same manner as had been done by General Ne Win. He also stated that although Burma needed and wanted assistance from the United States, Burma must remain neutral. It was his desire that I explore the situation and talk of final arrangements later. He directed that I be shown everything I wanted to see and that all of my questions be answered.

In addition to expressing his desire for U. S. weapons and technicians, he stated that he wanted some of his officers to visit West Point with a view to gaining knowledge to improve the operation and organization of the Burma Military Academy. During this discussion U Ba Swe said that he hoped he would be able to visit the United States during April and receive medical treatment for a leg ailment. (The official invitation has been extended, accepted, and

NOFORN

TOP SECRET

U Ba Swe is now in Boston undergoing medical treatment.)

During my farewell call on U Ba Swe in Rangoon he expressed satisfaction with our visit and appeared to be hopeful of U.S. military assistance. He again pointed out the necessity of Burma being neutral because of her weakness and the need for building up reasonable military strength to resist external aggression, which he referred to as eventually coming from Communist China.

U Ba Swe emphasized to me that during my visit I had been shown all of their military secrets and that I must be trusted to see that they are properly safeguarded. He earnestly requested that none of the information which I had received be transmitted under any circumstances to representatives of any foreign country and that it only be disseminated to U.S. military personnel who had an absolute need to know. I promised to comply with this request as far as it is possible within my own limited responsibility. I assured him, however, that every reasonable precaution would be taken to safeguard the information that had been given to us. (This is a very sensitive point with all of the Burmese officials and should be kept in mind in the handling of documents submitted herewith and all discussions arising therefrom.)

Talks with members of the staff of the Burma Army, Navy, and Air Force commenced during the afternoon of 27 February and covered the over-all situation of the armed forces, the insurgent situation, and general requirements of the armed forces to meet government objectives as regards military equipment and training assistance. Similar talks were held at intervals during visits to various installations. Final discussions with General Ne Win and members of his staff were held on the afternoon of 7 March 1957 at which time final requests were submitted for military and technical assistance for the armed forces.

On 28 February 1957 Colonel Maung Maung urgently requested a private and confidential conference with me in a secluded spot. We met in the Army Attache's home. Colonel Maung Maung stated that he had been directed to contact me and inform me of the results of a meeting which had been held that day by three cabinet members, including Prime Minister U Ba Swe and three senior military officers, including General Ne Win, himself, and one other. He said that he had been directed to inform me that these officials were extremely concerned regarding their interpretation of the term "modest" amount of military aid. He stated that this high-level governmental group was insistent that a substantial amount of equipment must be furnished in order to prevent serious embarrassment to the government by the opposition, as well as loss of face internationally.

The group was reported to consider that the decision to accept assistance from the United States, even though it be on a reimbursable basis by token payment, is in reality an alignment with the United States. It was emphasized that such an alignment would cause great damage to the government

TOP SECRET

unless a substantial amount of equipment is provided without delay to enable the government to prove the wisdom of its decision. As spokesman, Maung Maung stated that the group had grave doubts regarding the wisdom of this course unless they were assured that substantial assistance could be furnished and that implementation of an informal agreement could be carried out in a very expeditious manner.

Colonel Maung Maung also stated that Zhukov had offered the Prime Minister an open invitation to send a mission to Russia at an early date to look at their equipment and select the types and quantities desired. Zhukov made no mention of any method of payment.

In answer to my question as to whether the Burmese realize that the Russians would demand payment later in a form which might not be acceptable to the government, the spokesman stated that he and other members of the group hate Communism and Russia and desire no dealings whatsoever with the USSR. They were deathly afraid of any deal with Zhukov and his colleagues, but if substantial aid was not furnished in a reasonably expeditious manner, the pressures were so great they might be pushed into accepting some form of offer from the Russians if they could not make arrangements elsewhere.

With regard to these other arrangements he stated that his government was exhausting every possible means of finding money to purchase equipment from non-bloc countries and intended to do so to the limit of their ability, even though the United States did provide some aid. He implored me to realize that the situation now was simply one of a competition between the bloc and the United States, and it was the opinion of the Prime Minister and others represented that Zhukov would give equipment to Burma if he feels it is his last opportunity to beat out the United States.

Colonel Maung Maung stated that the cabinet considered the decision to accept military assistance from the United States to be the most agonizing and difficult one with which they have been confronted. He also pointed out that the Burmese leaders had great fears that this type of association with the United States would probably cause an intensification of Communist penetration and subversion which the Burmese Government would not be able to deal with unless arrangements made for military assistance could be executed in such a manner that it would deter any such aggressive operations by the Communists, particularly the Chinese Communists.

Colonel Maung Maung stated that he had also been directed to bring to my attention the concern which the high-level group had regarding statements that had been made to the effect that our aid would be for the suppression of insurgency. He emphasized the fact that the Burmese leaders are particularly sensitive to such a program and take a dim view of assistance that would be provided only on the basis of stamping out insurgency. It is their claim that they are sufficiently equipped at the present time to deal with the insurgents. It was further pointed out that such a position on the part of both the Burmese and U.S. officials is very bad diplomacy because the giving

NOFORN

of military assistance to Burmese to enable them to kill other Burmese would certainly be looked upon most unfavorably by most Burmese, the Buddhists in particular. The acceptance of military assistance for this purpose would also have a damaging propaganda effect. It is the feeling of the Burmese leaders that any such statement can be profitably exploited by the political opposition as well as the Communists. In my opinion this statement of views is well taken.

Subsequently, during separate conversations with Defense Minister U Ba Swe, General Ne Win and Colonel Aung Gyi (Vice Chief of Staff Defense Services - Army), the statements made to me by Colonel Maung Maung were verified as being the opinions of these officials. These officials are very apprehensive of having any dealings with the USSR. The two colonels on more than one occasion expressed their grave disappointment and fears of the barter deals that had already been made. It is believed that the whole group realizes that the USSR technicians and instructors would have to be accepted along with any equipment provided by the USSR. Colonel Aung Gyi and Colonel Maung Maung told me on separate occasions that if Russian technicians were sent to Burma, these technicians would be worth more to the USSR than the cost of the equipment which might have been provided.

On more than one occasion I was cautioned by the senior officials who have been named in the above paragraphs to the effect that our policy should be to provide military and technical assistance to the Burmese Government for defense against aggression, not for suppression of insurgency.

The Honorable Defense Minister, U Ba Swe, General Ne Win, and Col. Aung Gyi (GSO-1) during my final discussions informed me that the list of equipment submitted was that desired for provision of the necessary equipment for early organization of two infantry divisions; expansion of the Air Force to support these divisions; and expansion of the Navy to meet combat requirements against insurgents, perform coastal patrol, and offer some resistance to external aggression. These officials stated that Burma did not desire this assistance as grant aid because acceptance of aid on this basis would constitute a definite alignment with the U.S. and the West in general. They stated definitely that Burma desires to purchase the equipment included in the lists on a reimbursable basis. U Ba Swe further explained that the Burma Government desired the equipment at reduced prices if possible. He hopes that when payments are made, arrangements can be consummated for lending the amount of these payments to the Burma Government for economic or other developmental purposes.

It was strongly emphasized that all transactions in connection with any form of military assistance that may be authorized for Burma must have the outward appearance of being a straight business deal. It was also pointed out that the Burma Government realized that even though they purchased military equipment outright, this act in itself would be construed by the political opposition, and particularly Communist China and the USSR, as an alignment with the United States and the West. The Minister of Defense stressed the

NOFORN

fact that his government would have to accept this risk with any consequences that may follow and pleaded that the aid would be substantial, at least in the eyes of the Burmese people and potential aggressors in the Asian area.

It was U Ba Swe's view that even if the government received only a token amount of equipment, this would be looked upon as an alignment with the United States, and his government would be in a ridiculous position at home and abroad in the Asian area and would be accused of selling out to the U.S. for only a token amount of assistance. He felt that since Burma had decided to accept this assistance from the United States it must be in substantial amounts and must be delivered without undue delay in order to save embarrassment to the government and gain support for this "alignment."

While at Maymyo, Col. Aung Gyi, who is a most influential member of the military hierarchy, asked me to set a time for a special conference with him. At the time, he suggested that we walk through the park at Maymyo for our discussion so that we could not be overheard. I agreed to meet him later that afternoon, and did so. Instead of going to the park he took me to a room at the Army Guest House which had been placed under guard for this meeting. He had various charts and maps displayed on the wall showing the dispositions of the Burmese forces, the intelligence reports indicating the location, strength and disposition of insurgents, as well as purported location of Communist Chinese across the border.

He gave me a rather lengthy summary of the history of Burma from the date of its independence in 1948. He then reviewed the difficulties that had been encountered by the young government and likened them to those which confronted the thirteen colonies of the present United States. He also related, in detail, the situation which existed in 1952 during the revolt within Burma and the confused insurgent situation that has continued from that time. Using charts, he explained the progress that had been made in regaining control of territory and elimination of insurgency. He described in general terms the psychological warfare program that had been conducted for the past two years and claimed that some results had been achieved.

He stated that many of the prominent insurgents had been school mates and friends of the officials of the present government and likened this situation to the one which existed in the United States during our Civil War. During this conference which lasted some two hours, Col. Aung Gyi pointed out that it was the desire of the government to suppress insurgency without creating deep bitterness within the country. Using another example from United States history, which he claimed to have studied, he referred to the bitterness which he believes to exist in our country today as a result of the fierce fighting between the north and south. He stated that it was the policy of the government to face up to the insurgents, the Communist groups in particular, and kill them off if it be necessary, but that it was their strong desire to win over as many of the insurgents as possible to avoid the aftermath of bitterness among the suppressed people.

Aung Gyi demonstrated an unusual knowledge of American history which gave me the impression that he endeavors to compare the trials and tribulations of the young Burmese Government with those of the United States during our early history as an independent nation. The Colonel was still disturbed regarding his understanding of the United States view that military assistance may be given for the suppression of insurgency instead of building up the armed forces for defense against aggression. He was particularly sensitive on this point.

He forcefully stated that the group of men now running the government had fought determinedly to preserve the sovereignty of their country and to maintain the government and that they were dedicated men who would fight to the last ditch against revolt and aggression from any quarter.

He informed me that the armed forces had voted against Zhukov's visit but had been overruled by outside pressures, and further that the armed forces had dragged their feet and shown Zhukov and members of his entourage as little as they could get away with. He was very definite in his statement that he and the leaders of the armed forces at the present time wanted no dealings whatsoever with the USSR or other bloc countries. He feared that pressures would force them to accept some undesirable arrangement to provide the equipment which is necessary to meet the present insurgent situation and build up strength for future defense.

He also stated that it was the government's estimate that the United States and the USSR would reach the peak of their military strength in 1960 or 1962. For this reason, they frequently used the term "the next five years," which is the period that the Burmese leaders feel they have to develop their maximum strength before a show-down faces them. It is their belief that when the United States and the USSR have developed their maximum military potential by 1962, these two major powers may destroy each other. If this occurs, Burma will be left without friends and must be prepared to defend herself from external aggression which is expected to come from Communist China. It is also the view that if by 1962 the United States and the USSR do not engage in an all-out war, the tension will be so great that small and peripheral wars will break out. In this case, Burma must be prepared to defend herself against external aggression because she cannot be assured that any major power in the free world would come to her defense with sufficient strength to oppose Communist China or possibly India under such circumstances. He considers that Burma is a choice target because of her geographic location, the small population as regards its land area, close proximity to large nations now suffering from overpopulation, as well as the vast undeveloped resources to be found in Burma.

The Burma Army has an extensive school system for dependents. The Army operates additional facilities at all of the major posts, using both civilians and military teachers. I visited one of the schools attended by some 700 children. The facilities appeared to be adequate. Classrooms are not crowded, and it appeared that the school was being conducted in an excellent manner. All children are required to learn the Burmese language. The Army also conducts various programs of adult education and permits attendance

NOFORN

within the limitations of the capacity of the schools and school staffs by civilian adults residing in the community in which the school is located.

In addition to these school projects, the Army has undertaken a limited number of projects to bring children from distant points to schools at government expense with a view to integrating the various tribes and peoples within the country. After graduation, these students are encouraged to return to their communities or join the Army. This type of project is really a part of the psychological warfare program.

Burmese officials claim to have an extensive psychological warfare program designed to discredit Communism and influence the insurgents to return to normal occupations and lives. I was unable because of lack of time to examine this program except in a casual way. The U. S. Army Attache, however, attested to the fact that the program was extensive and he believed it to be rather effective.

Among all echelons I found a feeling of distrust of Baptist missionaries and members of the Baptist faith in Burma. This may, in part, be attributed to the fact that the Karens, probably the fiercest fighters in Burma, were originally a Baptist group and now have many leaders who follow this faith. I was informed by Col. Tun Sein that his brigade is in the process of building an orphanage which will be located on the outskirts of Taunggyi. It is their plan that all Baptist orphans in that general area will be taken into this orphanage where they will be cared for, tutored, and indoctrinated against the Baptist faith, with a view to having them join the Army when they grow older. Tun Sein said that wherever there was a Baptist there was potential trouble. This opinion was applied to members of the faith of the Assembly of God who he termed as worse than voodooists. He frankly admitted that they planned to sabotage the Baptist movement wherever possible. In answer to questions regarding other religious faiths, Tun Sein stated that followers of other faiths were all most cooperative and were not looked upon as potential trouble makers.

In accordance with my terms of reference and at the request of Ambassador Satterthwaite, I endeavored on several occasions to bring up the situation of the Union of Burma Police for discussion, but on each occasion my questions were parried in such a manner as to indicate that they did not desire to discuss this matter. On the day before my departure I pointedly asked Col. Aung Gyi if he did not desire me to discuss possible assistance with some of the Union of Burma Police officials. He replied that it was unnecessary. I then mentioned that I had received a query from the police which indicated that they were interested in discussing assistance with me. Aung Gyi became riled and asked me who had contacted me. I stated that I did not desire to give away a confidence. He then stated that no one had authority to bring that matter up with me or to discuss it with me without his approval. He requested me to give him the name of the person who had made the query so that he could immediately take disciplinary action. I reminded him that he and I were friends and that it was my policy never to betray another friend, and I could not comply with his request because if I did so he, too, would probably lose confidence in me. He then said he would arrange for me to have

NOFORN

a meeting with some of the police officials before my departure, but he never did so.

Discussions with various military officers gave me the distinct impression that there is little trust and confidence by the Armed Services in the Union Military Police. The Union Military Police is a separate organization under the Minister of Home Affairs and is not considered by the military to be very well trained or reliable. Present plans provide that forty percent of the occupation troops in areas seized from insurgents will be Union Military Police. These police units will be under command and operational control of the Army Commander assigned to the area. Administration will remain with the parent organization.

Military Situation in Burma

The military situation regarding the insurgents, the external situation, and the Burma Army and Air Force is included in the Attache report enclosed herewith as Tab C. The Navy situation is included in Tab F.

During discussions with various officials including Colonels Aung Gyi, Maung Maung and Tun Sein (Commander of 4th Brigade, stationed in the Shan State), I was personally and confidentially informed additionally as follows:

(1) The government does not plan to conduct further military operations against the KMT if the situation can be handled by other means. It is presently planned to subvert the KMT organization and "buy off" their leaders. This plan is reported to be cheaper in the long term. Colonels Aung Gyi and Tun Sein claim that the KMTs have been successfully penetrated by the Burmese and that negotiations with the more important KMT leaders were being conducted at the time of my visit.

(2) The KMT have been receiving arms and supplies via the Ching Mai route from Thailand. It was alleged that General Phao was aware of this and had profited from this traffic.

(3) I was informed that U.S. caliber 30 carbines can be bought in various places in Burma for \$60.00 each and that these weapons continue to be brought in from Thailand. It was implied that the carbines were coming through Thai police sources and that the weapons were from stocks furnished by the United States.

(4) The insurgent Karens have been mainly supplied from Thailand and had paid for the arms and supplies with wolfram mined in the Karen State. The more important wolfram mines are now under the control of the Burmese Army.

(5) Colonels Aung Gyi and Tun Sein both informed me that the Thais had agents and radios with the KMTs and Karen insurgents and frequently communicated with these groups.

(6) These officers also advised me that the Chinese Nationalists maintain military representatives at Bangkok under Embassy cover to arrange for and provide supplies to the KMT group. (This report is true. The Chief of the group is a ChiNat major general.)

~~TOP SECRET~~
~~TOP SECRET~~

(7) Contrary to various intelligence reports regarding the Burma Road I found that section of the road over which I traveled some 25 or 30 miles to be a two-lane highway, surfaced with macadam. Col. Tun Sein informed me that he had traveled with Chou en Lai a distance of 120 miles across the border into China over the Burma Road and that the condition of the road was excellent and of the same type of construction. He believed that there were many more miles of excellent Burma Road beyond the point in China to which he had traveled with Chou en Lai.

During our stay in Burma we visited a number of military installations. A brief summary of the itinerary and comments on units visited is attached as Tab B.

During our discussion of mobility factors regarding ground force organization, the Burmese brought out the fact that the Government of Burma owns 400 elephants which are used from time to time in military operations. It was stated that over 100 elephants were used to carry artillery, ammunition, and heavy loads during the last significant operations against the KMTs in the vicinity of Mong Hsat. Photographs were produced which were taken during this operation which showed elephants crossing the Salween River with their pack loads. These photographs also disclosed a novel movement of artillery. Twenty five pounders were broken down into loads suitable for elephant packs. The elephant is said to carry a load of 800 pounds for at least six hours, but they require very special care and handling in order to keep them in proper shape. It was interesting to note that the elephant had been used successfully in mountainous regions with such heavy loads. The Burmese consider the elephant to be a very valuable means of mobility in the handling of any heavy loads that they may have within their military forces, even though their movement may be very slow.

During our observations and various discussions the Burmese officers repeatedly endeavored to impress upon us the enthusiastic spirit of their troops. The watchword of the forces is "We do it ourselves." There were various manifestations of this spirit in the demonstrations that were provided for us.

Burma is extremely short of personnel with technical training of sufficient level to operate and maintain various types of modern military equipment. This fact is realized, and efforts are being made to train as many individuals as possible in certain trades and technical schools in order that this shortage may be overcome. It appears that within the limitations of funds available, a very sound training plan has been developed and is being executed. The Burmese officials realize that many improvements must be made in this program. There is a very great shortage of qualified instructors. Requests for instructors and technicians for assignment to various technical and trade schools are included in the enclosed reports for the Army, Navy and Air Force.

The Burmese officials desire U.S. instructors and technicians on a contract basis. They insist that the contracts must be written so as to indicate that the contract is a straight business deal with the Burma

~~TOP SECRET~~

Government. Retired officers and civilians are acceptable as military instructors provided they are certified to have the necessary professional knowledge and ability to perform the tasks to which they will be assigned. It was impossible to get a clear statement regarding any organization that would be suitable for U.S. representation, even though it is disguised, as far as the instructor and technician group is concerned because the Burmese officials themselves could not agree, at the time, on the best method of handling such a contract with our people. They have a variety of contracts at the present time with the Swedes, Israelis, Yugoslavs, Japanese and British.

Burmese officials are extremely shy of any "organization" of military instructors and technicians who may be procured on contract because of their disappointing experience with the British Mission. I was repeatedly informed that the British Mission deliberately prevented the proper training and development of the Burma Armed Forces and that their control group (planning group) was arbitrary, wasteful of time and money, and dedicated to preventing the armed forces from developing cohesive strength. The Burmese are prone to insist upon direct control and supervision of all persons employed on a contract in any capacity. It is believed, however, that further negotiations can arrive at an arrangement whereby military instructors and technicians can be provided on a structure similar to a MAAG, but on a civilian contract basis.

In reply to my inquiry regarding the channels for communication concerning matters which might not be entirely clear in our report, I was informed by Col. Aung Gyi and Gen. Ne Win that the channel must be from the U.S. Defense Department through the U.S. Army Attache at Rangoon. I informed them that it would be necessary in many cases for our Ambassador to participate or be involved in some of these transactions and it was agreed that the channel may pass through the U. S. Ambassador but should be transmitted to the Burma military authorities by the Army Attache. I asked whether it was intended to bypass the Burma Foreign Office and was clearly told that the Burma Foreign Office would have nothing to do with matters which had been discussed. In reply to my inquiry as to whether or not the Burmese Military Attache or the Burmese Ambassador in Washington should be contacted pertaining to matters we had discussed, I was definitely informed by these same officers that the Burmese Ambassador or Military Attache should not be contacted on any matter pertaining to the armed forces. It was even suggested that we not even inform them that we had visited Burma.

It is suggested that these matters be borne in mind in further dealings with the Burmese Government with reference to the armed forces or any military assistance, at least initially.

Colonels Aung Gyi and Maung Maung informed me that they desired professional assistance with the intelligence school as a separate project. In reply to my inquiry regarding the type of project that was desired, I was informed that it was to be solely an armed forces activity.

No commitments of any kind were made to any Burmese officials by members of my group. In fact, we stressed the point that we were in Burma to familiarize ourselves with the military situation, discuss requirements, and report on

NOFORN

recommendations to superior U. S. authorities.

A summary of the data required by Tab A is as follows:

- a. The proposed expansion and reorganization of the Burmese forces are included in Tabs D, E and F.
- b. The present equipment status of Burmese forces is included in Tabs D, E, and F.
- c. The equipment deficiencies under the present organization are included in Tabs D, E and F.
- d. The equipment desired by the Burmese and the purpose for which it is desired are indicated in this memorandum and in Tabs D, E and F.
- e. The Burmese propose to acquire the equipment which has been listed in Tabs D, E and F on a reimbursable basis. They desire that prices of equipment be reduced and that token payments be arranged, if possible. It is also their desire that negotiations for payment be held from time to time and that when a payment is made the amount paid be loaned back to the Burmese Government for economic or other developmental purposes. (Note: The officials have some knowledge of the U.S. arrangement with Laos. They suggested that their proposition was a better one for the U.S. than the agreement that we have with Laos and pointed out that in their case we would not have to pay the personnel of the armed forces as they understood to be the case in Laos.)
- f. The Burma armed forces cannot be considered on the whole as a well trained force. There does exist a nucleus of well trained and experienced officers and enlisted men. Many of these officers have graduated from foreign military schools and have had a considerable amount of field and combat service. The Air Force has very limited capabilities, mainly because of the lack of suitable equipment, maintenance facilities, and technical personnel, but does have a fairly good nucleus of well trained and experienced pilots.

The Army also contains a hard core group of professional officers, many of whom have graduated from foreign schools and have had a considerable amount of field and combat experience fighting the Japanese, British, Chinese and insurgents. The bulk of the Army was organized in an emergency situation which permitted an average training time for new personnel of only 7 days before being sent into the field against insurgents. As a rule, these units have acquitted themselves against the insurgents in a creditable manner but need a considerable amount of training which cannot be undertaken until the present internal situation improves to an extent that will permit withdrawal and assembling of ground units for this training.

NOFORN

The Navy has very little capability because of the lack of adequate equipment, repair facilities, and trained personnel. This unit is reported to have acquitted itself in a very satisfactory manner, particularly during river operations in support of ground forces. The level of technical training is very low, and efforts are being made to improve this situation. Considering other small Asian countries, it is thought that the Burmese naval officers, many of whom have had foreign schooling, are above average.

- g. The Burmese have a very sound concept for their school system for training personnel but are seriously handicapped by the lack of training aids and qualified instructors. They appeared to be doing a satisfactory job on their own with their limited facilities. They have done an excellent job with the facilities that are available but realize the deficiencies which exist. It is planned to expand the facilities and the scope of instruction and increase the number of trainees if assistance is provided by the United States, and U.S. instructors and technical assistants can be provided on a contract basis.

A factor which may affect the situation to some extent, and which may become more serious with the provision of equipment which has been requested, is the lack of sufficient personnel within the country who have a suitable level of education to absorb the necessary training to qualify them to maintain and use many types of modern equipment. It was impossible for us to arrive at any definite conclusion as regards this important factor because of the brevity of our visit.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- a. It is recommended that favorable consideration be given to providing military assistance on a reimbursable basis to the Burma Government for the organization of one division on an austere basis in accordance with the plan outlined in Tab D at an early date and that equipment for the second division included in that enclosure be provided subsequently on an austere basis. It is our opinion that the Burmese Army has sufficient qualified personnel at the present time to profitably utilize the amount of equipment requested for the first division and can develop a training base for utilization of equipment requested for the second division within two years.
- b. It is recommended that favorable consideration be given to providing the aircraft with maintenance and training assistance that will be required for adequate support of these two divisions.
- c. It is recommended that favorable consideration be given to providing such naval craft and facilities which may be required to support the ground forces in operations against the insurgent forces and conduct limited coastal patrol.

NOFORN

- d. If favorable consideration is given to the provision of any equipment or assistance to the Burmese Government, it is recommended that it be delivered without delay and in sufficient amount to capitalize on the psychological factor which would be involved in this transaction. If assistance is to be given, it is believed that early and substantial deliveries of equipment will be of prime political significance.

Enclosures:

Tab A - Terms of Reference to
Gen. Erskine for discussions
with Burmese officials dtd
16 Oct 1957

G. B. ERSKINE
General, USMC (Ret)

Tab B - Burma Itinerary and
Comments

Tab C - Brief Summary Military
Situation, Burma - Army & Navy -
by USARMA, dtd 19 Mar 1957

Tab D - Report on Union of Burma
Army by LtCol G. M. Blencoe, USA,
dtd 5 Apr 1957

Tab E - Report on Union of Burma
Air Force by Col. Clifford Nash,
USAF, dtd 4 Apr 1957

Tab F - Report on Union of Burma
Navy by Cdr J. B. Sprague, USN,
dtd 7 Mar 1957

TOP SECRET



Approved For Release 2003/10/07 : CIA-RDP80R01731R000300160002-4

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS

Refer to: I-16772/6

Document No. _____
Review of this document by CIA has
determined that
☐ CIA has no objection to declass
☐ It contains information of CIA
interest that must remain
classified at TS S 0
Authority: HR 10-2
☒ It contains nothing of CIA interest
Date 13/2/81 Reviewer

16 October 1956

25

MEMORANDUM FOR GENERAL ERSKINE

SUBJECT: Terms of Reference for your Discussions with Burmese Officials

It is requested that you plan to proceed to Burma to discuss an undertaking of providing modest amounts of military equipment and training to the Government of Burma during your tour of Southeast Asia. The Government of Burma has not made an official request for a team to visit Burma. However, it is anticipated that such a request will be received in the near future and further instructions will be issued to you on receipt of the Burmese request, probably while you are in Bangkok. Your Terms of Reference for these discussions are as follows:

For policy guidance your attention is called to the sections concerning Burma in NSC 5612/1, NSC 1290-d and general instructions in NSC 1550. (FYI - It should be noted that the U.S. Government believes this is an opportune time to make a special effort to meet Burmese Government requests for assistance which might contribute to the internal security of Burma.)

The primary purpose of discussions with authorized officials of the GUB is to ascertain GUB requirements and to determine Burmese requests for specific U.S. cooperation which might be met through the provision of modest amounts of equipment and training over a period of the next few years. As the problem of internal security also involves police and immigration services, an attempt should be made to develop information concerning the requirements of these services and to indicate a willingness of the U.S. to entertain requests to assist these organizations.

Burmese requests for U.S. assistance should be evaluated and recommendations prepared for U.S. action in response.

In discussions with Burmese officials it should be kept in mind:

- a. Burma is presently eligible for reimbursable military aid.
- b. The U. S. is prepared to subsidize military assistance to Burma (FYI - up to a total of 10 million dollars) over a period of several years. The U. S. is prepared to accept token payment, deferred payment and payment in local currency for such military assistance.
- c. At this stage discussions with the Burma Government are exploratory and for the purpose of developing recommendations. The U. S.

Approved For Release 2003/10/07 : CIA-RDP80R01731R000300160002-4

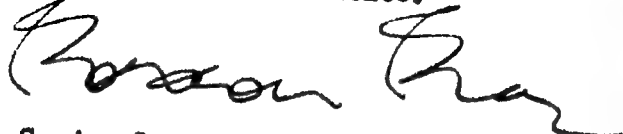
TAB A

~~SECRET~~

should not be committed to any specific course of action at this time.

In conversation with Burmese officials it is desirable that you attempt to develop the following information:

- a. Any proposed expansion and/or reorganization of Burmese forces.
- b. Present equipment status of Burmese forces.
- c. Equipment deficiencies under present organization.
- d. Equipment desired by Burmese and purpose for which desired.
- e. Method by which Burmese propose to acquire equipment.
- f. Burmese training deficiencies.
- g. Burmese plans for rectifying training deficiencies.



Gordon Gray
Assistant Secretary of Defense (ISA)

~~SECRET~~

TOP SECRET

NOFORNBURMA ITINERARY AND COMMENTS

27 February, P.M. - Brief visit to Naval Dockyard, short cruise on UBS Yatanabon and boarded UBS Mayu for lunch. The UBS Yatanabon is a very modern patrol vessel capable of making 36 knots. The hull and most of the structure is aluminum, being a new British design. Its armament consists of two 25 pdr dual mounted guns in turret forward and two aft with two 40 mm forward and two aft. It appears to be an excellent craft for the inland waters and coastal patrols of Burma. The Burmese now have two of these boats with at least four more on order from Great Britain. Two British technicians are on duty to familiarize the crews with the vessels. The UBS Mayu is an old frigate which appears to be useful for coastal patrol and limited operations in the lower reaches of the main rivers of Burma.

28 February, A.M. - Visited Burma Air Force Station, Mingaladon, toured the maintenance facilities of the Communications Squadron (composed of C-47, Cessna 180 and eight Bell Helicopters) and the Advanced Flying Unit (composed of British Vampire Aircraft). Spare parts are practically non-existent. Excellent hangar space is available. Air machine gunnery and light rocket practice is conducted alongside the air strip with little regard to safety precautions. Officials reported that no accidents had occurred as a result of these practices. A demonstration of acrobatics was given by a pilot in an old fourth-hand Spitfire. Flight charts and records of the operations offices appeared to be well kept and well thought out.

The group was then airlifted to Burma Air Force Base, Hmawbi, where a tour of the maintenance facilities and operations of the First Fighter Bomber Squadron was completed. The Squadron is equipped with obsolete British Spitfires and Seafires.

Visited the paratroop school at Hmawbi. This school has rather limited facilities which have recently been constructed. Training aids, including a jump tower with inclined cable, were well constructed and maintained. The school was recently organized by two young Burmese Army officers who graduated from the course at Fort Benning. A demonstration of training techniques was given. This was followed by dropping two sticks of paratroopers. Although the facilities are extremely limited, the product of this phase of paratroop training seemed to be exceptionally well done. As the last stick of troopers were approaching the ground, the demonstration announcer said, "Gentlemen: You are now watching the finest paratroops in the world." Morale was high. Reports indicated that 364 students had been qualified by the school, with only two injuries, one a broken ankle, the other a sprained leg. The trip to and from Mingaladon to Hmawbi was made by helicopter flown by Burmese pilots who appeared to handle them well. It is planned that six battalions of infantry will be trained as paratroops.

Visited the Recruit Training Depot and observed these troops performing close order drill and physical exercise. It was well conducted - British style.

TOP SECRET

NOFORN

Observed basic artillery training by recruits on 25 pdrs, 76 mm pack howitzers (Yugoslav), 120 mm mortars (Yugoslav), and 40 mm Bofors anti-aircraft guns. All of these exercises appeared to be well conducted and with smartness. The battery of 40 mm Bofors is a recent acquisition from Sweden. Two Swedish officers on contract, in civilian garb, were supervising this training.

1 March, A.M. - Arrived Mandalay. Visited supply center. This supply center also contains a disciplinary cantonment. The main supply base has been recently constructed and consists mainly of ten new brick and concrete storehouses, approximately 100' x 300'. The storehouse area is well laid out and is nearing completion. Several of the buildings are now being used for storage of ammunition. Adjacent to the storehouse area there is located a magazine which consists of some 30 buildings mostly constructed of concrete. The general layout and design indicated that they were probably designed with Japanese engineer assistance. A great many of the buildings were not provided with embankments, and there appeared to be a considerable fire hazard from overgrown grass, although water lines and hydrants had been provided throughout the area. I called this to the attention of my escorts who stated that these facts were realized, but they had not been able to get around to providing all of the precautions. This supply center at Mandalay is soon to become the main supply base for the Northern Command. It will also be the center for all ordnance and transportation repairs (third and fourth echelon) of the Northern Command. I was informed that the base will be fully operational within four months of the date of my visit.

P.M. - Arrived by automobile at Mayayo.

2 March, A.M. - Visit to the Officers Training School. This school trains cadet officers in a two-year course. The cadets come from sources other than the Military Academy. Meager facilities existed but were neat, orderly and well run. Activities observed included physical training which consisted of about one platoon undergoing various forms of physical training, including judo and bayonet fighting. The bayonet training was Japanese style. The students were provided with the various masks, wooden rifles, etc., used by the Japanese. Six sets of this special bayonet training equipment have been purchased for use by various units of the Burma Army. Evidently a considerable amount of effort is devoted to all forms of physical training in order to prepare these young officers for rigorous field duties.

The animal transport demonstration consisted of a pack mule company which was handled by student officers. These students are required to spend at least two full days packing various types of equipment and supplies on the trail during their course. The animals were small mules similar to those used by the Marines in Nicaragua. The pack saddles had been procured from India. All equipment was in excellent shape, except the leather which had not been properly cared for. The demonstration was carried out in an excellent manner.

TOP SECRET

The assault course demonstration. The assault group consisted of one platoon which advanced over a mined area which had been so laid as to represent artillery and mortar fire. Live ammunition was used. Numerous smoke grenades were employed. The course was laid over very rugged terrain where visibility was difficult. The demonstration was carried out in an excellent manner and with a great deal of élan on the part of the participants. There appeared to be a laxity in safety precautions because the students advanced through the mined field while the mines were being exploded. One student was too close to one of the mines when it exploded and was blown about five feet in the air. No notice was taken of him for the moment, but he was later evacuated to the hospital by ambulance. My inquiry the following day elicited the information that he was not seriously hurt. They appeared to think he had been slightly careless. This was an excellent demonstration.

Public speaking course. This class consisted of some 20 students in the lecture hall. Each student was required to give a 15 to 20 minute talk on a subject of his own choice. While I was present, the first student spoke on forestation and the woods of Burma. It was delivered in English and appropriate displays were made. His performance was excellent. The next presentation, which appeared to be rather extemporaneous, was a political speech delivered by one of the students on call by the instructor. This talk was given in Burmese which I did not understand, but I got the impression that he was a forceful and convincing speaker although a very young man. It was explained to me that the Burma Army considers it to be necessary that all officers be able to speak publicly and to refute charges made by radical and Communist speakers in the localities where these officers serve. It is the present plan of the Burma Army to require its officers to make speeches to the population in newly occupied areas which have been seized from insurgents and to do a better job than the Communist speakers do. Colonel Aung Gyi, who accompanied me on this occasion, stated "We'll beat the Communists by out-talking them if they will not come out in the open and fight" and said this concept was the reason for training all officers in public speaking.

Visited the Burma Electrical and Mechanical Engineer (Northern Command) Workshop. The workshops, according to British designation, correspond very closely to our maintenance units. This workshop was a fairly complete organization which was housed in temporary buildings, mostly with thatched roofs and woven bamboo walls. It was immaculately clean and appeared to be well supervised and administered. We were briefed on the workshop organization and repair and inspection procedures. It is also a training school for repairmen in the various branches. This workshop was responsible for repair of weapons and motor transportation. The tools available were extremely limited. The main force consisted of civilians who were experienced in their particular lines. Student soldiers acted as assistants and received on-the-job training. In addition to on-the-job training, these students were also given a considerable amount of theoretical and classroom instruction. The whole concept of training specialists in this work shop appeared to be very sound. Each student was required to make his own set of tools which he would use in his assignment as a technician after leaving the school. A demonstration was given in the

dismantling and reassembling of a jeep. Six men participated in this demonstration. They disassembled and reassembled the jeep, including the removal of the radiator and water therefrom, removal of wheels, body, steering wheel and other detachable parts from the chassis, within a period of three minutes. The morale of the entire organization appeared to be very high. Everyone seemed to be proud of the work he was doing.

Visited the Burma Army Engineer Regimental Depot. A briefing was given covering the organization of the training course followed by a demonstration of a water crossing training exercise. This water crossing training exercise was held on a small pond and was carried out in an excellent manner. Explosive charges were laid in the pond and on the beach to represent artillery fire. The tactical principles employed closely paralleled those for river crossings in our own services. Canvas boats, some with outboard motors, were used for moving the troops across the water after the exercise began. It was an excellent exercise which was carried out with a great deal of enthusiasm. Here again, many safety precautions seemed to be disregarded with a result that one of the planted charges blew one of the boats completely out of the water a few seconds after the troops had debarked. No casualties were apparent however. A demonstration in assembling a Bailey Bridge was also executed in a very satisfactory manner.

3 March - Departed Maymyo for Heho where we arrived at 0900. From Heho we made a recreational tour to Inle Lake via Yawngwe, after which we arrived at Kalaw at 1500. From Kalaw I went to Aungban which is the station of a mountain artillery unit. The mountain artillery unit put on a demonstration of a pack battery going into action. This unit was equipped with horses which had been procured from Yugoslavia. The demonstration, including reconnaissance, location of the battery, going into action, loading, laying, and simulated firing, was carried out very closely to a school solution. The only incident observed which varied from approved technique was that one of the pack horses became excited and bucked off his load. Returned to Kalaw at 1800.

4 March - Departed Kalaw for Laksawk via Pindaya. The Defense Staff School near Laksawk was visited enroute. It is a small installation which the Burmese hope to develop to be a counterpart of our Command and General Staff School. Classes average about 30 students. Instructors are probably fairly well qualified, being graduates of various foreign military schools. There is a great shortage of up-to-date instructional material and manuals. U. S. material is desired. Contract instructors have also been requested from the United States.

From the Defense Staff School we traveled by auto to Aungban where I had previously observed the demonstration by the mountain artillery unit, thence by Cessna plane to Laksawk where I visited the installation of the Defense Services Academy (Military Academy). This installation is small, well laid out, and is provided with various classrooms and facilities on a most austere basis. The barracks occupied by the cadets were immaculate and well kept. The cadets who were observed appeared to be well disciplined

TOP SECRET

and military in their appearance. My visits to the lecture hall, classrooms, and physics and chemistry laboratories indicated a great scarcity of equipment, particularly in the laboratories. The school is headed by a civilian, but the majority of instructors are commissioned officers of the Army. The instruction which I observed was carried out in a very satisfactory manner.

The next stop was to observe the operation of the Burma Army Combat Forces School. At this place I visited the various schools and observed the instruction being carried out. Among those visited were: Armored Wing, which was presenting instruction on methods of attack by armored troops; the Artillery Wing, which was presenting technical instruction (parallelism); the Artillery Wing (Signals Branch), which was conducting a class to familiarize students with the techniques required for finding faults and capabilities of changing valves; the Lady Officers' course, which consisted of some 12 lady commissioned officers who were undergoing close order drill; the company commanders' course which was conducting a terrain exercise; the combined veterinary and remount depot which has recently been constructed and stocked.

The purpose of the Remount Depot is to breed animals for the combat forces. Approximately 100 mares have been procured from Yugoslavia and appear to be a staunch breed for this particular purpose. The jacks were procured in various localities, mainly Mexico. The installation is modern in every respect. The sanitation and organization of this depot appeared to be of an extraordinarily high standard.

(Note: Several days before departing from Kalaw on this trip, I was asked whether I preferred to go to Lawksank by plane instead of automobile. It was pointed out at the time that the roads were difficult and the trip would be time-consuming by car. I stated that I would prefer to go by air if it were possible. Upon leaving Kalaw on the morning of the 4th, we proceeded to Aungban (Mountain Artillery Unit) where four Cessna planes were parked. Upon arrival there I remarked that I did not see the air strip which was located alongside the artillery encampment during my previous visit for the demonstration and wondered why I had been such a poor observer. Col. Aung Gyi and others proudly stated that the air strip was not there three days ago and informed me that it had been built for my convenience during the last two days. The strip was far from ideal, but it did serve the purpose.)

The Lawksank area constitutes a combat training area for the Army. The area now available is about 13 miles square and contains varied terrain which appeared to be suitable for almost any type of tactical training except amphibious and cold weather training. However, amphibious training can be conducted in the Inle Lake area which is nearby, and cold weather training can be conducted in the Himalayan Mountain area some distance away. This training area appeared to be suitable in every way for modern training and sufficient for the forces available. However, I was informed that another large tract of land which is adjacent to the area is now being surveyed as a preliminary to being taken over by the government as an extension of the present area.

5 March - Observed a live firing demonstration of an advance guard battalion reinforced by a battery of pack howitzers, a battery of 120 mm Yugoslav mortars, and a platoon of tanks. This advance guard battalion encountered

hostile resistance in a delaying action of the screen of the retreating enemy. The infantry deployed; the artillery and mortars went into action; the tanks came forward; followed by infantry. The troops approached within at least 300 yards of the artillery concentrations before the fire was lifted to subsequent targets. Live ammunition was used throughout the demonstration. The tank-infantry teams functioned excellently. The coordination of fire and movement was of the first quality. This was an impressive demonstration wherein the Burmese demonstrated their belief in artillery fire by the intensity and severity of the concentration. It was well done, and I was impressed with the smoothness with which the demonstration was conducted. I doubt that any other Asian army unit can put on a better demonstration than this one.

Departed the demonstration area near Lawksawk for Taunggyi which is to be the new headquarters of the Fourth Burma Brigade. This unit headquarters will displace to Taunggyi within six months. A small garrison is now occupying austere quarters but seems to be doing a good job with the facilities that are available. A display of the various rations available to Burmese troops was given at this command. The various components of the ration appeared to be suitable to the Burmese but most of the components would not be acceptable, except in an emergency, by the United States soldier. The various packs which had been designed for these different rations under various conditions of service indicated that much thought had gone into this project.

6 March - Departed Taunggyi for Heho by automobile. Departed Heho by air for Meiktela. Meiktela is the training center for the Burma Air Force. Separate discussion is included in the Air section of this report covering this base. Although there are limited facilities, the organization and conduct of the schools at this place seemed to be very well carried out. Departed Meiktela for Rangoon.

7 March, A.M. - Visited Burma Army Ordnance Workshop (ordnance plant) in Rangoon. This workshop is equipped with a miscellaneous variety of equipment from several countries and is producing 9 mm. ammunition and very light automatic weapons ("grease guns"). Details of our visit to this installation and production records are included in the Army section of this report. Plans provide for expansion of this effort for the production of 303 rifle ammunition and artillery and mortar projectiles.

P.M. - Final talks with General Ne Win and members of the staffs of the armed services.

8 March - Visited the Armed Forces Intelligence School. A briefing was given by the Staff on organization and operations of the Armed Forces Intelligence System and the school. A very limited amount of equipment and training aids were available. The building was suitable but in need of many repairs. Assistance in the conduct of this school is desired. See basic memorandum for additional information.

Farewell call made on the Honorable Prime Minister (U Nu) who invited me to return as soon as possible.

Lunched with the Honorable Minister of Defense who expressed his earnest hope that arrangements could be made for military and technical assistance

NOFORN

from the United States.

Departed Rangoon 2145 via Pan American Airways.



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

26 April 1957

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. ALLEN DULLES

I am transmitting herewith for your information
an amendment to the report which I submitted on my
visit to ~~Burma~~ under the date of 15 April 1957.

[Signature]
G. F. ERSKINE
General, USMC (Ret)
Assistant to the Secretary of Defense
(Special Operations)

Enclosure as stated

Document No. _____
Review of this document by CIA has
determined that:
☐ It contains information of CIA
interest that should remain
classified if: 1. 3. 5. (C)
Authority: FC 70-2
☐ It contains nothing of CIA interest
Date 13/2/81 Actioner []

SECRET

Attachment 40-



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON 25, D. C.

Executive Registry
9-2965

APR 25 1957

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE (INTERNATIONAL
SECURITY AFFAIRS)
THE CHAIRMAN, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

SUBJECT: Burma Trip Report

REFERENCE: Same Subject; to the Secretary of Defense from General
Arskine dated 15 April 1957

I conferred with the Honorable U Ba Swo, Minister of Defense of Burma, to clarify certain points pertaining to my visit to Burma and conversations with representatives of the Burma Armed Forces. Results of our conversations were as follows:

(a) Representatives of the Armed Forces while in Burma insisted that negotiations and matters to be taken up for clarification in connection with the provision of assistance to the Burma Armed Forces should be through the Army Attache at Rangoon, and not through foreign office channels. U Ba Swo stated that he knew that this was the desire of certain officials of the Armed Forces but that he had considered the matter seriously. He now desires that communications regarding all these matters be conducted by the appropriate U. S. official in Washington through our Ambassador in Burma and the Burma Foreign Office. Matters which are to be taken up locally may be passed to the Burma Ambassador or Military Attache in Washington, as appropriate. This constitutes a reversal of the procedure given to me by the Armed Forces officials in Rangoon.

(b) I brought up the matter regarding assistance to the police (12904 program) and suggested that possible assistance could be given at an early time through funds available which are not earmarked for military assistance. The Honorable U Ba Swo said that he felt that he should tell me now that the Home Minister had requested him to permit police officials to confer with me during my visit at Rangoon and that he, as Prime Minister at the time, disapproved this request. He felt then and now that this was a matter for the Burma Government to handle within their own country. He also stated that the Armed Forces of Burma constitutes the main law enforcement agency in that country and that the police operate under the Armed Forces when engaged in law enforcement. He considered it the responsibility of the Armed Forces to see that the police operating under their

S-5785-

SD-370

SECRET

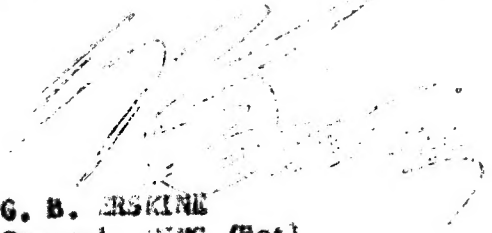
control are properly equipped and trained for the duties assigned to them while under Armed Forces control. It was quite evident that he does not desire any independent discussions or negotiations with the police. He firmly stated also that any instructors that may be required by the police should be provided through the Armed Forces, if the Armed Forces decided that such instructors were required.

(c) I informed him that Colonel Aung Gyi and Colonel Maung Maung had informed me that they desired assistance for their intelligence school as a separate Armed Forces project. He concurred in the view of these officers but stated that this project was only a part of the over-all project to assist the Armed Forces to become stronger and that the first priority must be given to strengthening the Armed Forces, mainly the Army and Air Force. He desires that this project be undertaken simultaneously with the over-all plan to improve the situation of the Armed Forces.

(d) While I was in Burma, the Armed Forces staff officers were insistent that instructors and technical personnel which may be provided be on a contract basis and that each individual sign a separate contract with the Burma Government. They also stated that these personnel would receive instructions directly from the department under which they would work. They did not desire any coordinating elements from the United States. The Honorable U Ba Swe stated that he understood this problem and the desires of his staff officers. He further stated that it would be necessary for each individual to sign a separate contract with his government in order to maintain the outward appearance of non-alignment, but he did agree to over-all supervision by personnel attached to the Defense Ministry, on a separate contract with the government, to coordinate and supervise all of the personnel that may be provided by arrangement with the United States. He also explained that the organization desired should be similar to our MAAGS but with a lesser number of personnel assigned, with each individual on a separate contract, in order to enable his government to maintain the fiction of not having any attachment to the United States.

The Honorable U Ba Swe does not now have definite plans because of the uncertainty of the length of time that will be required for completion of medical treatment he is now receiving in Boston, but stated that he desired to have an opportunity to meet the senior officials of our government, visit various mining projects in the United States and certain military organizations. He specifically stated that he desired to visit the airborne units at Fort Bragg, observe the operations from an aircraft carrier, visit a Nike installation in the near vicinity of Washington, the Naval Academy, possibly the Military Academy and such other military installations as we feel he should see in order to broaden his outlook on military affairs. He also stated that he would give us a suggested itinerary through the Burma Military Attache at an early date.

The foregoing modifies reference (a) as of this date. It is accordingly requested that copies of this memorandum be attached to reference (a) and be considered as an amendment to that document.


G. B. ERSKINE
General, USMC (Ret)

SECRET

FE-2538

Approved For Release 2003/10/07 : CIA-RDP80R01731R000300160002-4

UNCLASSIFIED		CONFIDENTIAL		SECRET	
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY OFFICIAL ROUTING SLIP 25X1					
TO	NAME AND ADDRESS		INITIALS	DATE	
1	CFE Division			1 May	
2					
3	CFE 25X1			2/5	
4	DCE/4			2/5	
5					
25X1	- pls file				
ACTION		DIRECT REPLY		PREPARE REPLY	
APPROVAL		DISPATCH		RECOMMENDATION	
COMMENT		FILE		RETURN	
CONCURRENCE		INFORMATION		SIGNATURE	

Remarks:

Believe you received our copy of the original report of General Erskine's to which this is an amendment.

3-5 - After reading desire to discuss with you.

FOLD HERE TO RETURN TO SENDER

FROM: NAME, ADDRESS AND PHONE NO.	DATE
Assistant to the Director	30 Apr 57

Approved For Release 2003/10/07 : CIA-RDP80R01731R000300160002-4

Approved For Release 2003/10/07 : CIA-RDP80R01720000300160002-4

DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION		REGISTRY
SOURCE		CIA CONTROL NO.
G.B.Erskine, Asst. Secry, Defense		1611108
DOC. NO.		DATE DOCUMENT RECEIVED
DOC. DATE 16 Apr.57		24 April, 57
COPY NO. #1 & 2		
NUMBER OF PAGES 1		
NUMBER OF ATTACHMENTS		
13 pg. rept. of trib & T bs A & B		

[illegible]

DOWNGRADED		DESTROYED		DISPATCHED (<i>OUTSIDE CIA</i>)	
TO		BY (<i>Signature</i>)		TO	
BY (<i>Signature</i>)		WITNESSED BY (<i>Signature</i>)		BY (<i>Signature</i>)	
DATE		DATE		OFFICE	
				DATE	

Approved For Release 2003/10/07 : CIA-RDP80R01731R000300160002-4